

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A method for removing leukocytes comprising ~~causing passing~~ a leukocyte-containing liquid to pass through a leukocyte removal filter comprising nonwoven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 0.3 to 3.0 μm to remove leukocytes from the leukocyte-containing liquid and to obtain a leukocyte-free liquid, ~~and further comprising using the~~ nonwoven fabric having a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm.

Claim 2. (Original) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30.

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein ~~the nonwoven fabric has a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm, and y satisfies the following inequality[[.]]:~~

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

Claim 4. (Previously Presented) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric is obtained by using a melt-blown method.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, ~~comprising: using a~~ wherein the leukocyte removal filter ~~comprising~~ comprises at least one of a filter for removing aggregate upstream of the nonwoven fabric ~~and/or~~ and a post-filter downstream of the nonwoven fabric.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is a flat filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is a cylindrical filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 8. (Original) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 6, wherein a container of the leukocyte removal filter is formed of a flexible resin.

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, [[comprising: causing]] wherein the leukocyte-containing liquid selected from comprises whole blood, red cell concentrate, platelet concentrate, platelet rich plasma, and or platelet poor plasma to pass through the leukocyte removal filter.

Claim 10. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising [:]] causing passing the leukocyte-containing liquid to pass through the leukocyte removal filter by utilizing head drop.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising [[:]] causing passing the leukocyte-containing liquid to pass through the leukocyte removal filter by at least one of increasing pressure of [[the]] an inlet side of the leukocyte removal filter and/or and reducing pressure of [[the]] an outlet side of the leukocyte removal filter.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising: performing extracorporeal circulation by continuously collecting whole blood from a body of a patient, causing passing the collected whole blood to pass through the leukocyte removal filter, and returning the leukocyte-free whole blood to the body of the patient.

Claims 13-24 (Canceled)

Claim 25. (Original) A leukocyte removal filter for a leukocyte removal method for removing leukocytes from a leukocyte-containing liquid, comprising: nonwoven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 0.3 to 3.0 μm and a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm.

Claim 26. (Original) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30.

Claim 27. (Currently Amended) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein ~~the nonwoven fabric has a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm, and y satisfies the following inequality[[.]]:~~

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55$$

Claim 28. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric is obtained by using a melt-blown method.

Claim 29. (Currently Amended) A leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising [:] at least one of a filter for removing aggregate upstream of the nonwoven fabric ~~according to claim 25 and/or and~~ a post-filter downstream of the nonwoven fabric.

Claim 30. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising a flat filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 31. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising a cylindrical filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 32. (Original) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 30, wherein a container of the filter is formed of a flexible resin.

Claim 33. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is ~~used~~ constructed to remove leukocytes from [[the]] a leukocyte-containing liquid ~~selected from~~ comprising whole blood, red cell concentrate, platelet concentrate, platelet rich plasma, and or platelet poor plasma.

Claim 34. (Currently Amended) A blood extracorporeal circulation device for blood, comprising [:] at least the leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25.

Claim 35. (Currently Amended) A blood extracorporeal circulation device for blood, comprising at least[:]] the leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25; an inlet for introducing whole blood collected from a body of a patient into the leukocyte removal filter; and an outlet for returning the leukocyte-free whole blood to the body of the patient.

Claim 36. (New) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric is further obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

Claim 37. (New) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising passing the leukocyte-containing liquid through the leukocyte removal filter by utilizing head drop or by increasing pressure of the inlet side of the leukocyte removal filter and/or reducing pressure of the outlet side of the leukocyte removal filter; and

wherein the nonwoven fabric is further obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

Claim 38. (New) The leukocyte removal filter of claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric is obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$